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THE SCHOLARS

A

POETICAL TALISMAN

BY

✓
HOWARD WINTON CARLWELL.



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CUSHINGS & BAILEY,

BALTIMORE.

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DEDICATION.

This little poem, written with the hope that it may cheer some discouraged one or awaken into activity some unused talent, to the memory of our departed President James A. Garfield, upon reflection on his great advancement in those paths requiring the firmest resolution, the highest ambition and the most indomitable will, is respectfully dedicated by

THE AUTHOR.

Baltimore, June, 1886.

THE SCHOLARS.

Mark ye the course of the determined scholar.
Of him who has his star of hope fixed high
Toward the heavens, and looking unto it
With longing eye resolves within himself
And says: "I will." Of him who is not turned
From that one path which leadeth to his goal,
By all the myriad troubles of this life;
But seeing each advancing in his way,
With warlike spirit bravely moveth on
And overpowers.

Lowly, perchance, the starting point of him
Who striveth thus. Far in the depths of
want

He may have nursed his hope with such fond
care

As that we see in some wild forest beast,
Which will his young protect and shield from
harm—

Ay, even unto death. Low down fame's hill,
Or in the valley darkened with despair,
May he have fought his first, his glorious fight;
But that primeval victory was to him
The founding stone of his immortal tower,
His worthy fame.

Slowly we see him rising to the top
In manner like unto the morning sun,
Who first dispels the darkness of the night,
Then next sends forth his lengthy rays of fire,
And, crowning all, appeareth his full form,
Which fills the world replete with glorious
light.

Day after day he seeks of knowledge more,
And scarcely finds a thing so humbly born

But yields some useful lesson. Block by block
Is builded to his tower as each new fact
He gathers to his store with mighty zeal,
Cementing each one firm in memory's wall
With strongest resolution.

A backward glance he turns upon his course ;
Observes the things now overcome, and feels
A mighty thankfulness within him rise
To that Great One who has endowed him so,
With such conception of his mortal life
That ever brings from inmost depth the
words :

I'll conquer if I can.

The fullest knowledge has he now of this—
The height attained by constant work—and
scans

The distance stretching upward to his goal,
With earnest calculation for success.

Each onward step conveys him now a charm

Exceeding far the one of previous place,
And like the pages of some master book,
Disclosing greater interest at each turn,
He finds attractions gathered round his way,
Increasing as he moves.

With courage true, his close companion cheer,
As springs within the sailor's loyal heart
When nearing port—he works ; and the result !
Grand and majestic looks his tower of fame,
Resplendent with the jewels of true worth
And looming high unto that envied sphere
Which none e'er reached but true great men,
Whilst constantly degrees of height, made
firm

With base so sound, a broad, pure mind of
depth

Produced by only noble thoughts—he adds
Unto its altitude sublime, till now
The topmost point is fixed and made secure,

And on that lofty peak appears the form
Of him who framed and reared the noble
mass,

His intellect descending to below
And lighting all with steady truthful rays.

His star of hope is fully overwhelmed,
And in its stead there blazons forth the one,
Reality. He hath no longer need
To crush his pride with shame, or feel the
want

Of friendly hand. His counsel now decides
In many things of highest, greatest weight
To all his kind. And his extended thought,
Like keenest frost on coldest winter's night,
Finds power great in places most remote.

But does this tide of honor, now so great,
Produce within the one to whom it swells

A stoic heart? Ah no! his reason broad
And nature true expel such things unjust
From their fair sight. He asks not foolish moon
To keep his tide at zenith height; but turns
With reverent feeling unto God, and finds
Sufficient strength to keep it there himself.

He gazes not unmoved upon the sight
Of one who struggles hard for learning's prize,
But has a sweet remembrance for the time
When he was working on in depths unknown,
And with a smile of benefaction kind
He lends a helping hand.

Thus having lived in happiness his years
And filled the measure of his time below
With glorious deeds, he is transcended now
Unto that life, to drink for evermore
From that great cup, of which no man shall
taste

Until his form is ushered in by death.
And there, from those eternal heights, may he,
With smile of satisfaction round his lips,
Look down and read, inscribed upon his tomb,
An epitaph of honor to his name,
Engraved with lasting depth upon the slab
And deep alike within the hearts of those
Remaining here.

* * * * *

Look now inquiringly at one who starts
Upon his way with prospects smiling bright
His path illumined with the lustrous glow
Of golden opportunities derived
From wealth and ever watchful mother's care,
Which carry from his mind all anxious thought
And leave him light and free.
A rapid progress meets his first attempt
Which wholly fills the hopes of watchful
friends,

For such pure blood as flows within his veins
Doth furnish richest food unto his brain,
And brings a vigorous action to his mind
That masters things with ease which others gain
Alone by weary toil.

But noting this pre-eminence of force
Which elevates him o'er his fellow ones,
He is inclined to set too great a price
Upon the value of his worthy gifts,
And think endowments signify success ;
And thus depend upon his genius more,
His own exertions less. He now employs
Imaginary leisure to explore
The Sea of Pleasure with its many Gulfs,
Which cautiously he ploughs at first, grows
bold,
Enticed by varied snares of beauteous scenes,
Until at last, afloat upon its waste,
He feels the nausea form within his heart.

But ah! his head the acting helmsman is
Which takes his passions for the rudder's use;
And thus they steer among the currents swift
And numerous as the countless stars. And
look!

The track which they pursue to danger leads.
One current to a dreadful fate fast flows
And bears them on, environed in its grasp,
Until they reach the awful spot, the pool
That ever draws and whirls and holds too firm
To extricate, and constitutes, indeed,
A dread Charybdis of the modern time.

Now bound within this web, he slowly yields
And sacrifices time, which he should use
In nobler ways, unto these pleasant things.
So stronger in weak ways he ever grows
Until a perfect votary he is
To empty nothingness. Year after year

He passes in this way ; each leaving less
To mark its path than any yet before ;
Until at last, unknown unto the world,
He leaves all earth behind.

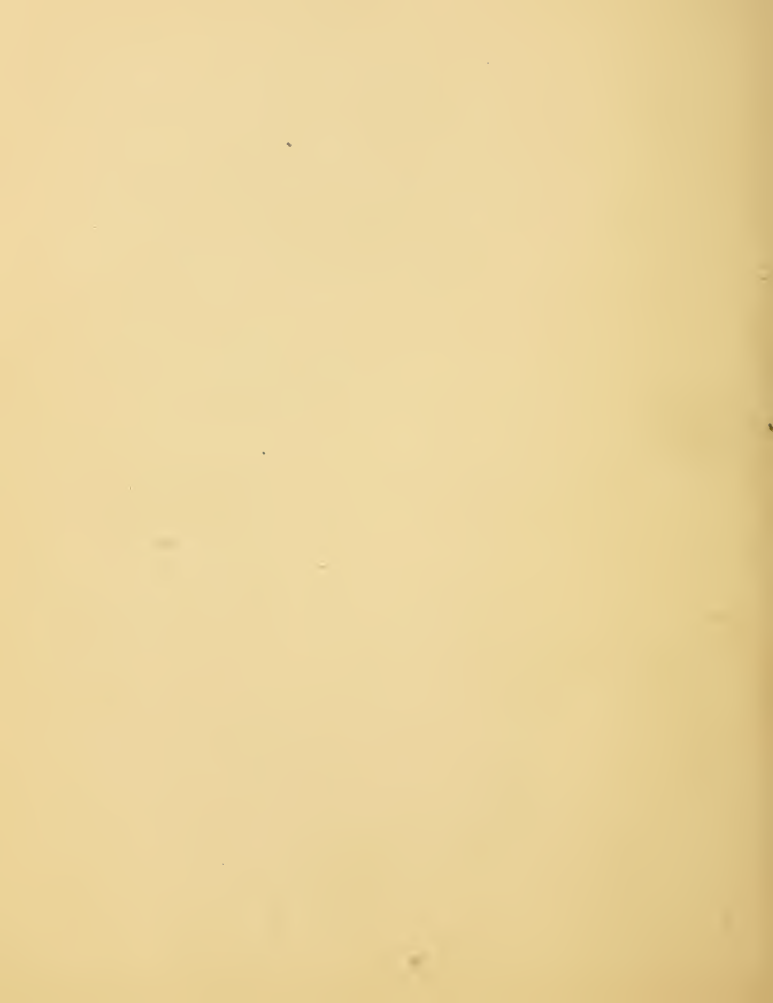
And as some friend
May chance to pass his final resting place
He sadly looks upon the spot and says :
“There lies a genius blighted and misused.”

* * * * *

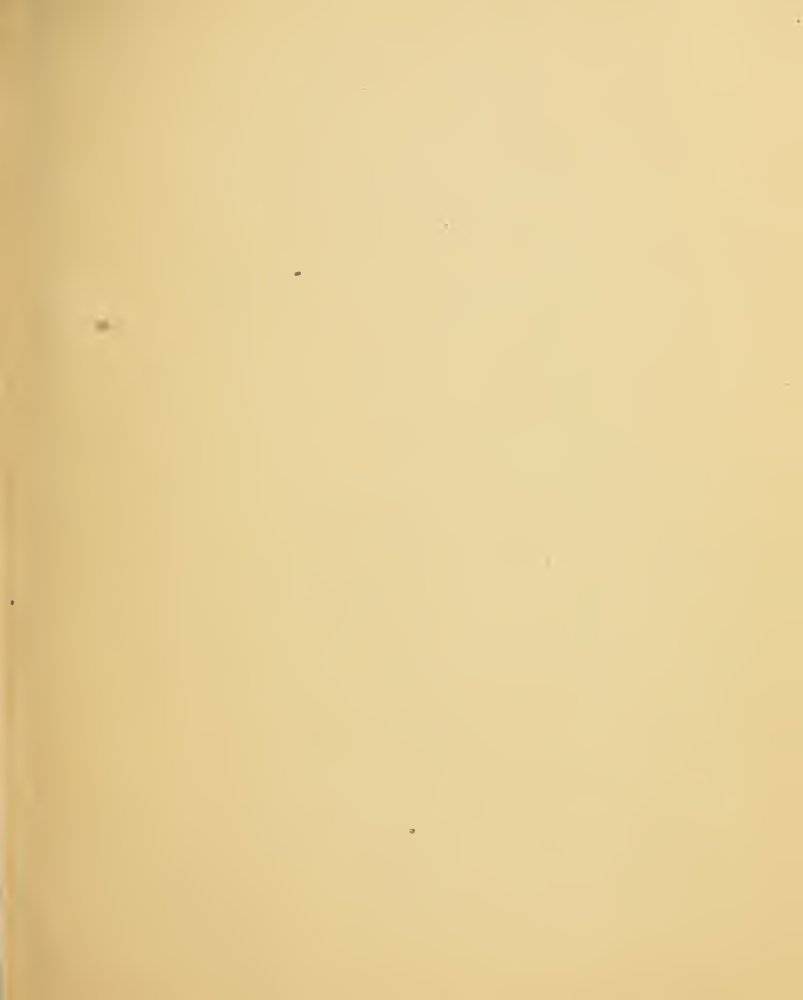
Think now upon the great diversity
Which showed itself between these two who
worked
Contemporarily within a field
Which level was alike unto them both
And interspersed with hills to each the same.
But one was loth to exercise his strength
In climbing hills, and therefore must needs
walk

In lowly spheres, While he who felt impressed
With duty to his God ; and called his power
To useful work ; and faltered not the more
Because the hill a mountain almost seemed—
Reaped richly in the harvest field of life.

Turn now unto thyself with thoughts of these,
With cognizance of application's worth ;
And ask thyself the question for a life :
Will I, or will I not ?







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